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BEQUEATHED BY

MRS. ANNA LOUISA MÖRING,

OF CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Received Sept. 15, 1890.

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Mrs Möring
With the regards of the
Misses Parsons
November 1886.

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CATHARINE AMORY PARSONS.

A Memorial.

Ellen Susan S. Bulfinch

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

1886.

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CATHARINE AMORY PARSONS.

THE death of Mrs. THEOPHILUS PARSONS (Catharine A. Chandler), which occurred at Cambridge on the 8th of April, removed from earth a lovely and gifted woman to that world whose blessedness she had loved to anticipate, and where, since the death of her husband, her true home seemed to be. Her long life of eighty-one years was not marked by many or great outward events, but she was in some respects a remarkable woman, whose traits of character deserve special notice, and whose beautiful memory is a blessing to her friends. She survived her

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husband, Professor Parsons, of the Harvard Law School, only four years; and as their marriage had taken place in early youth, the period of their union, unbroken save by death, seemed to cover almost the whole of their life.

It is, indeed, as a wife and mother, as a bounteous giver of hospitality and dispenser of most gracious home influences, that her friends will best remember her; and so she would have liked best to be remembered. Brought up under a different system of education for girls from what now prevails, she felt that her home life offered full scope to her ambitions; and to this life she brought her finest powers and unwearying attention, finding in it time and opportunity for beautiful accomplishments, while from it was shed abroad a light of gladness and help to all whom she could reach.

Mrs. Parsons was endowed with a bright and original mind, great good sense, a keen

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perception of humor and ready wit, an evenness of temper and self-possession which made her, more than most people, "equal to the event;" and those most intimate with her knew that her nature contained a depth of reserve often unsuspected.

When the War of the Rebellion called many women from their homes to assist in the hospitals, and her daughter volunteered for the service and assumed a position of great responsibility at the West, she found in her mother a sympathetic helper and sustainer, whose letters and boxes of clothing for those in need were a continual reminder of her distant home.

Mrs. Parsons had much beauty in early life, and was more than usually beautiful in her old age. She was described, when young, as very slender, with chestnut hair and oval face, dark brows and eyes, and rich color. The perfect purity that breathed in her expression, in her words and actions, and in

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her fresh and delicate attire, is an essential part of our recollection of her.

Her fondness for flowers was great, and her success in raising them wonderful. Her garden gave the largest and most fragrant roses; and the whole neighborhood was always the richer for these treasures, which often were of foreign and costly varieties. Everything that spoke of Nature and of country life was dear to her. She was proud of her country birth in the beautiful village of Petersham; and her long life in city associations and surroundings had only strengthened her love of Nature's aspects and laws, which constantly spoke to her, through her Swedenborgian faith, the language of deep, spiritual truths.

On the privileges and charms of a country life her husband liked to draw her into conversation before the distinguished guests from other cities whom he welcomed to his table, and whose happiest entertainment was often

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found in listening to the interchange of bright ideas and ready wit between their gifted hosts. Would that some of those conversations could have been preserved! The two seemed at their best with each other, and each responded to the other's thought or illustration with a marvellous quickness and wit.

In her children and in the child-life about her, in young mothers and their babies, Mrs. Parsons found a great joy; and the nurture and guidance of children formed in her view one of the noblest duties of women, and a privilege to be highly valued. Her sympathies went out very much to all young people, whom she was especially fitted to advise and encourage by her own large experience, by her perfect frankness, and by her peculiarly bright and attractive gifts in conversation.

Her servants were always her friends, and she spoke of them as such, winning their affection by her considerate care and by her patient thoroughness in teaching them. She

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loved domestic work herself, and regarded it as a beautiful privilege of womankind, — a point in her character which it is right to dwell upon at this time, when household work suffers in the estimation of many. With her it was to be counted a golden opportunity to serve her family and friends; and it was this that gave a special charm to her hospitality, that she seemed to consider her guests as conferring, rather than receiving, a favor. Certain household duties and especially some little services for those she loved, she insisted on doing with her own hands, and clung to the habit as long as it was possible for her to perform her task. An instance of this was shown in her always choosing to mend her husband's socks herself, as a wifely privilege.

Mrs. Parsons had enjoyed in her youth the best advantages that the time afforded for improving an uncommon talent for drawing and painting; and all through her life, in the midst often of many cares and responsi-

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bilities, she took much delight in her studio, sometimes bringing there flowers or fruit from her garden to paint, sometimes taking her color-box with her on her country drives or seashore rambles, to secure a bit of landscape or a study of rocks and seaweed. Her appreciation was very keen of anything beautiful in Art as in Nature; and she was never happier than when instructing in her favorite pursuit any friend who showed an interest in learning or made an appeal for advice, while her own attitude was always that of a student, and she improved every opportunity, even to her latest years, for practice and for gaining fresh knowledge.

Her religious faith was a real and vital part of her existence. In a notice written for the "New Church Messenger," her pastor, the Rev. James Reed, relates an incident which greatly impressed him. A few years ago, when visiting her during an illness attended with severe and excruciating pain, she

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said to him: "It seems to me that we ought to be more than passively patient when we suffer; we should try to co-operate with the Lord in the purpose which He has in our suffering."

In her religious life she had the deep sympathy and support of her husband, and the two were united by this bond in no common degree. Both of them members of the New Jerusalem Church, in which he was so distinguished a leader, they looked forward together to the life beyond with that strength of conviction which their faith inculcated. In that life we can believe that after this brief separation they are now reunited.

E. S. B.

CAMBRIDGE, May 6, 1886.

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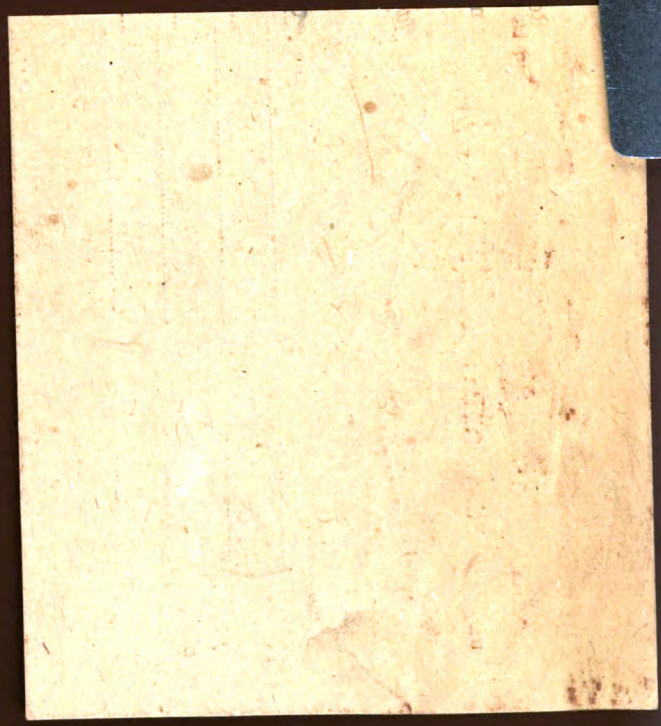

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